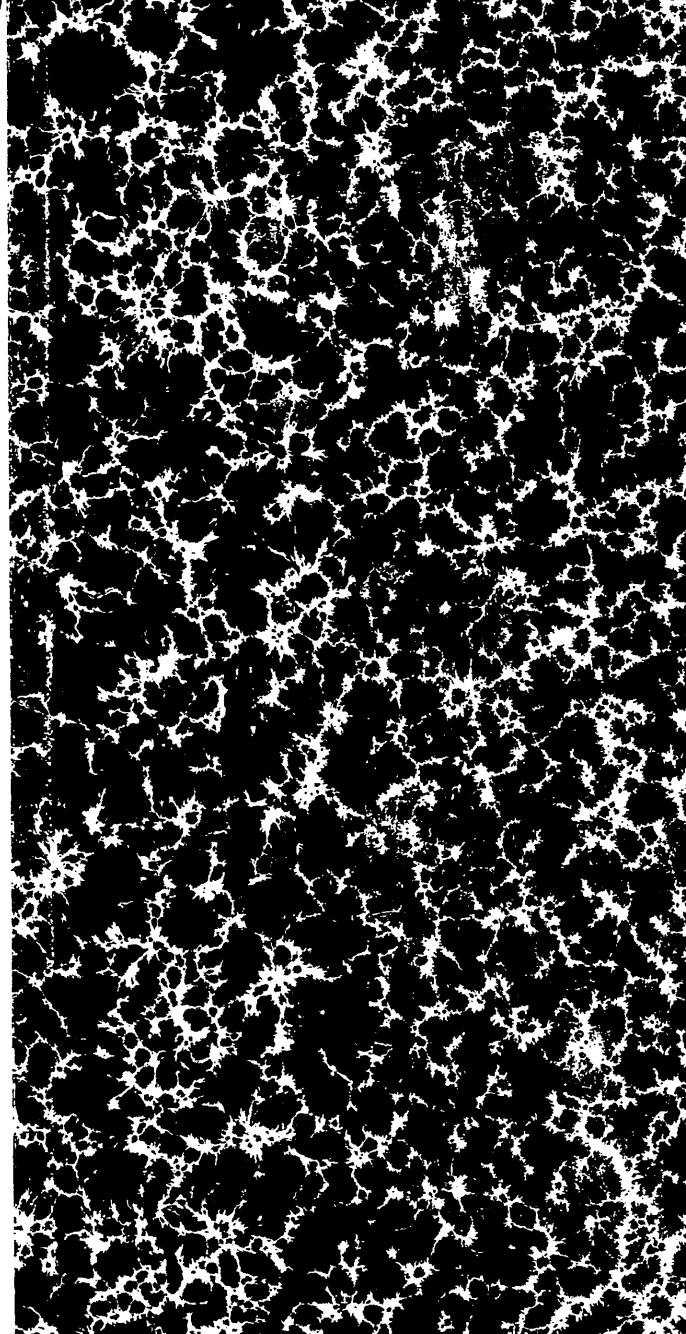


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THE TRIUMPH OF AN INDIAN WIDOW

The Life of Pandita Ramabai

By MARY LUCIA BIERCE FULLER





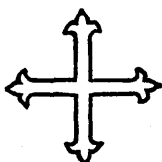
RAMABAI

The Triumph of an Indian Widow

The Life of Panditā Ramābāi

By

Mary Lucia Bierce Fuller



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Foreword

PANDITĀ RAMĀBĀI SARAVASTI has been truthfully depicted as Indias' foremost woman. Several biographers have presented her to the literary world in books of eminent worth. They have set forth the fascinating story of her experiences as an educated Hindu widow, her conversion to Christ, and her abundant labors on behalf of her less fortunate Indian sisters. It has remained, however, for Miss Mary Lucia Bierce Fuller to paint the lights and shadows of this great life in a word picture at once concise, complete and compelling. Miss Fuller has been qualified for her task by a passionate sympathy for India's people, an intimate acquaintance with Ramābāi in her own home in Mukti, Kedgāon, and by her surpassing literary gift. She was born in Mharashtra, Ramābāi's native province, and acquired naturally a complete mastery of the beautiful Marathi language. Miss Fuller's parents were missionaries of note in India. Her mother was recognized widely as an authority on conditions among India's women, and was the author of the book "The Wrongs of Indian Womanhood" which has been widely used as a text for missionary study. The influence of this noble mother was widely felt in Western India and she was used of God to lead Ramābāi into deep spiritual

experiences which became a great incentive to her later and larger usefulness. Ramābāi always looked upon Mrs. Jennie Fuller as a spiritual mentor to whom she owed much of her religious heritage. The sacrificial life of faith which characterized Mrs. Fuller's service in India appealed strongly to Ramābāi's earnest soul. Having seen in Hinduism much of austerity that was fruitless and disappointing, her heart responded to the influence of a life that was at once unworldly and radiant with the presence of the living God. Miss Fuller spent several years in the service of the great institution at Kedgāon during the lifetime of its worthy founder.

The Ramābāi Mukti Mission comprises several departments all of which are consecrated to the service of Indian Womanhood; i. e., the Shāradā Sadan, or House of Learning—the School; the Krupa Sadan or House of Mercy—the Rescue Home; and the Mukti Sadan, or House of Salvation—the Orphanage.

When Ramābāi was bereft of her beautiful and accomplished daughter, Manorama Ramābāi, her heart turned toward the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Society in which she had many spiritual friends of kindred vision, as the most suitable custodian of the work which was the expression of her life. In her will she arranged that after Miss Hastie, her honored co-worker, should desire to relinquish the responsibility of carrying forward her work at Kedgāon, the Christian and Missionary



PANDITA RAMABAI WHEN SEVEN YEARS OF AGE. WITH HER FATHER, MOTHER AND BROTHER
Her father, Ananti Shastri, was a pioneer in the Emancipation of Indian Women

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Alliance should become the legal trustee and continue the work after the pattern that she had laid down. The Board of the Christian and Missionary Alliance accepted the trust on behalf of the many friends who earnestly desired that the Ramābāi Mukti Mission should be perpetuated as a monument to this noble Indian woman.

Miss Fuller has written this gem of biography as part of her contribution to the work of her beloved "Bai."

The Ramābāi Mukti Mission is maintained entirely through the voluntary contributions of those who are responsive to the need of India's women and girls. The workers in charge at Mukti look to God directly for the supply of every need and stand in faith for the \$25,000 per year which is needed to maintain the institutions. The Christian and Missionary Alliance is simply a transmitting agency for funds contributed and as trustee is responsible to maintain the work according to the methods and principles of its founder.

This volume is therefore sent forth with many prayers that it may prove a welcome messenger to all friends who have been linked in the past to Panditā Ramābāi and her work and that it may serve also to welcome many new partners into this fellowship circle of faith and love.

MRS. W. M. TURNBULL.



Preface

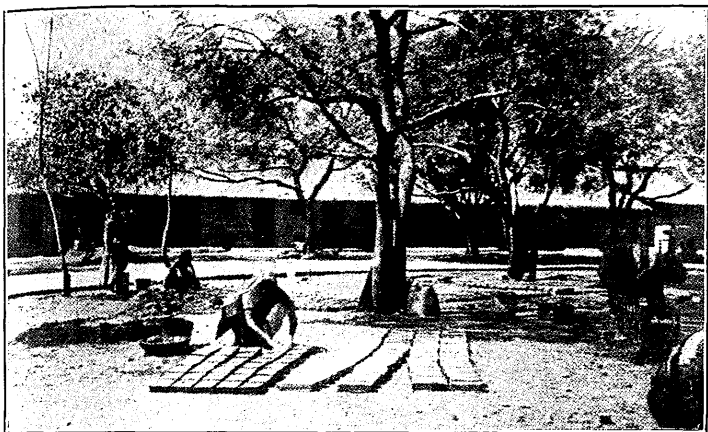
IN SENDING to the press this brief account of the Panditā Ramābāi Sarasvati, written over a year ago, I am keenly aware of its many faults of writing and structure, its frequent inconsequence, its disproportions, its utter insufficiency. It was written late at night, in odd corners of time, and under heavy pressure of other work. Had I the leisure, I would rewrite it all. Since I may not, I beg my reader's leniency, and entreat his interest in Mukti Sadan, to which Ramābāi gave all the splendid powers of her heart and mind. As the work is great, so is its need great, of money, and even more of prayer.

And I cannot emphasize too strongly that though it is an incomplete portrait I have drawn of a very great woman—great lady, patriot, educator, scholar and saint—at least it is drawn with the honest pencil of sober fact. Here is no romancing, no over-coloring. Ramābāi in her greatness is beyond me to show. "The half has not been told."

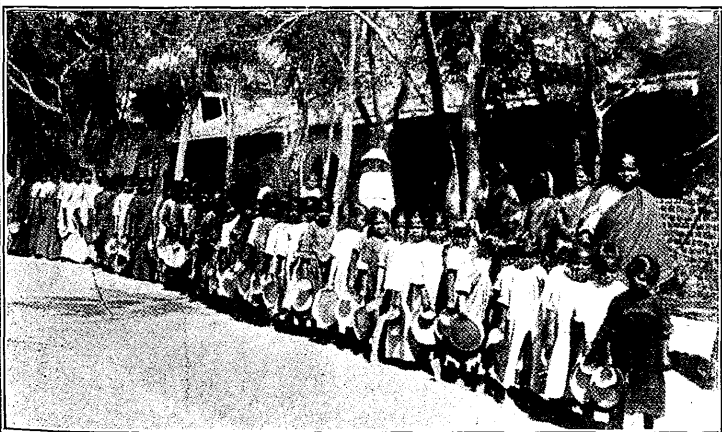
However, there is of this amazing woman another portrait, drawn by a far more skillful hand than mine; and my deep regret at the unworthiness of my own sketch has been greatly tempered within the last few days by the deep thankfulness with which I have read a new and all too short book by

Dr. Nicol Macnicol, M.A., D.Litt., which is called *Panditā Ramābāi*, and has recently been published in the *Builders of Modern India Series* (Association Press, 5 Russell Street, Calcutta, India. Pp. 147, paper cover, postage prepaid, 55 cents). First of all, I must correct a slight mistake which appears in its preface and for which I am to blame. Last year, when I sent Dr. Macnicol a manuscript copy of this pamphlet, I sent it first to a friend on the *Asia* staff, who after reading it sent it on to Dr. Macnicol. Since it came to him from the *Asia* offices, he naturally concluded that it was to appear in *Asia*, and so states in his preface. However, this sketch was never intended for any thing but its present purpose, and was written at the request of my friend, Mrs. W. M. Turnbull, who in her zeal for the Mukti Sadan (which since the Panditā's death is called the Ramābāi Mukti Mission) has undertaken the publication of this pamphlet.

I hope that not one of my readers will rest until he has obtained a copy of Dr. Macnicol's moving and impressive book; for Dr. Macnicol, not only because of his learning in general, his knowledge of India in particular and his literary skill, but even more because of his long devotion to India, his rare insight into the Indian mind, and his understanding of the human heart, is uniquely fitted to depict this lovely Brahmāni, who was not only among the Builders of Modern India, but was the greatest woman of modern times, and called Mother by so great and diverse a multitude as no other woman



BRICK MAKING AT MUKTI



LITTLE GIRLS' DINNER PARADE, MUKTI

ever gathered into the shelter of both her heart and her roof.

For the facts assembled in this pamphlet I am indebted to many more people than I can either name or thank here: first, of course, to Ramābāi herself, and to many of her workers and girls, especially to Miss Victoria Brazier for the use of her own file of *The Mukti Prayer Bell*; then to the Wantage Sisterhood for the invaluable gift of eight typewritten books of careful records of Ramābāi and her daughter Manoramābāi, not to mention much other and very great kindness; to the books on Ramābāi's life by Mrs. Helen S. Dyer, Manoramābāi, and Miss Clementina Butler, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Ramābāi Association; to Mr. D. G. Vaidya, editor of the *Subodha Patrika*, for his Navayuga article on Ramābāi, and for the loan of his files; to Rev. J. F. Edwards, editor of the *Dnyānodaya*, for the loan of his files; to Miss Charlotte L. Laurie, of Cheltenham, for the loan of her files of the Cheltenham Ladies' College magazine; to Mrs. Ramābāi Rānāde, of the Sevā Sadan, Professor D. K. Karve, founder of the Women's University in Poona, and his wife, who was Ramābāi's first pupil; to Mr. V. K. Bhide, who for thirty-five years has taught in Ramābāi's Shārāda Sadan, and to my own mother and father. As for Dr. Macnicol, my obligation to him is manifold, as are my thanks.

MARY L. B. FULLER.

Oberlin, Ohio, February 27, 1927.

PANDITA RĀMĀBĀI

Panditā Rāmābāi died on April 5, 1922, at her school, the Mukti Sadan, in Kedgāon in the Bombay Presidency, India; and was born in the forest of Sangāmūl in the western Ghāts, on the borders of Mysore State, on April 23, 1858, of Konkanasth Chitpāvan Brāhman parents. Brāhmanas are the highest caste in India, and among Brāhmanas the Konkanasths have no superiors—if they have equals—whether in caste, breeding, mental power, or practical and especially administrative ability. I shall have more to say of them later.

PARENTS

Both of Rāmābāi's parents were remarkable people. Her father was Ananta Shāstri Dongre, born about 1786, a great *shāstri* (one learned in the Hindu *shāstras* or scriptures) who as a young man had studied with the best *shāstris* in Mysore, Poona and Benāres. Young men flocked to him to study Sanskrit. He was a thinker, too, and had ideas far in advance of his time. He believed strongly in educating women and suffered much persecution because he taught his wife and daughters not only to read and write Marāthi, which was quite bad enough, but to read and write and recite the sacred Sanskrit, the very "voice of the gods," and long

forbidden to women. He was to have been excommunicated by an authoritative council of four hundred learned priests and scholars assembled at Shirur-Sode, but so wide was both his sacred and historical knowledge that for two months he withstood his judges, reciting authority after authority in his own defence, until he had triumphed utterly. And when they could not refute him, he demanded of them a signed writing that he had done nothing contrary to the *shāstras*—nevertheless he was ostracized, and rancourously condemned at one time and another.

On the other hand, his great learning brought him great honour, and he was called upon to recite the *shāstras* before many rājās, from Mysore in the south to Nepāl in the north, and received princely gifts of money, and once even a pair of young elephants! Ramābāi described him as a man of impressive presence, and of a “radiant countenance.”

His wife, Lakshmibāi, was hardly less remarkable. Indeed, her ability was amazing. Married when only nine years old, she committed many thousands of Sanskrit stanzas to memory, and in time had six children, of whom she reared three, managed servants, and entertained her husband’s many students and constant guests. Besides, she planted a garden and trees, and supervised the care of a hundred odd head of cattle. The administration of Buckingham Palace or of the White House would have perplexed her not at all. And all her clear-

headed foresight, grasp of detail, and executive power were her daughter's, in an even greater degree.

CHILDHOOD

Lakshmibāi so loved her books that she studied late at night, since she had no other time; and when Ramābāi, the youngest child, was ready—at the age of seven—to begin her study of Sanskrit, and her father too occupied to teach her, it was her mother who arose at four in the morning and with the drowsy child in her lap taught her the Sanskrit grammar and dictionary. Sanskrit books were so scarce in those days that every pupil had first to commit to memory the whole grammar and dictionary (rhymed for the purpose) before he took up the great classics—the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Purānas, the epics and other poetry. But of course Ramābāi was not taught the Vedas or Upanishads, for even her reformer father believed these to be closed to women.

By the time she was twelve, she knew eighteen thousand *slokas* (stanzas) of the classics by heart. To these she added many more; but when I once asked her the total number, she replied evasively, for she was always very modest, "Something more than eighteen thousand, then," she said carelessly, but with the little smile that meant further questioning would be useless. However it is on record that she knew eighteen thousand stanzas of the *Bhāgavata Purāna* alone.

PILGRIMAGE

Ramābāi's father was lavishly, recklessly hospitable, and in time, through the dishonesty of men he trusted, he was reduced from great wealth to poverty. He sold everything to pay his creditors, and the family set out then on a life of pilgrimage, and went up and down India for fifteen years. They walked literally thousands of miles. I had it from Ramābāi herself—and she never exaggerated—that she and her brother, who survived the rest, walked about seven thousand miles in all. When one looked at her beautiful little feet, one marvelled. In her last illness, when weary with lying she was walking slowly about her bed, she laughed as I entered the room, and said, "I sometimes wonder if it was really I who used to walk so much!"

THE MADRAS FAMINE

At first the family fared very well. They were not mendicants, by the way, and never begged. They were called upon by rājās and many others to recite the *shāstras* and epics, and were lavishly rewarded. The father, moreover, had shares in several prosperous shops, which brought him large returns. Then he had heavy losses, and in 1873, while in the south, they were overtaken by the terrible famine which culminated in 1876-77, and in which five million people starved to death. In 1874, after prolonged suffering, both the father, now an old man, seventy-eight years old and blind, and the in-

domitable little mother, only forty-seven, but enfeebled by years of malaria fever, died within six weeks of each other of actual starvation—people who themselves, with princely hospitality, had in their time fed many hundreds.

POVERTY

Ramābāi was now sixteen years old. She, her brother and sister, almost too weak to walk, pressed slowly northward, and in a few months the sister died of cholera. Then for a few months, Ramābāi and her brother were taken in by a rich Brāhman who felt himself blest in having under his roof such great learning as was theirs. Daily the brother recited the sacred texts to the family, and the sister various epic and other poems; but presently the dependence of the life irked them, and they went on still northward. For over three years they wandered about, lecturing occasionally on education for women, and on other ideas they had gained from their father.

During this time they both became purely theistic. They saw the manipulation of reputed floating islands and discovered so many frauds in the course of their wanderings from temple to temple and shrine to shrine that they were utterly sickened with idolatry and, with their father's forthright courage, cut loose from it all. They were, however, still strict in their observance of ceremonial purity, and kept the prescribed caste rules for purification, what-

ever the inconvenience involved. A bathing place might be far to reach, and they weary and hungry, but food never passed their lips unless they were in a state of ceremonial purity; nor was food to be eaten unless it was free from all ceremonial defilement. The touch or shadow of a non-Brāhman, or a dog, made it unfit for use. A score of defiling mischances might befall such constant travellers, and if they did, the best food must be thrown away, though it were the last to be had and they many days fasting. In these lax days many Brāhmins who profess to keep caste do not count defilement that is unknown to others; but the old-fashioned Brāhman felt defilement as the Dutch housewife feels dirt, and did not play with mere appearances.

Ramābāi and her brother were so desperately poor during a part of these wanderings that sometimes she had only one *sāri*. Since the rule of ceremonial purity prescribes that only freshly washed and untouched garments may be put on after the ceremonial morning bath, Ramābāi was obliged to wrap herself in half the *sāri*, which among the Konkanasths is ordinarily eight yards long, while she washed and dried the other half, then put on that and washed the first half.

Often have I seen a poor woman tie the washed end of the *sāri* she wore to a tree or bush, and then stand away flapping the middle length to hasten the work of sun and wind. In hot weather the drying takes only a few minutes, but in wet or cold

weather it is another story, especially as the woman herself and the half she wears are dripping wet, since she must bathe in the *sāri* before she can wash the free end. Most Indians bathe in the open air, often beside a well or in a tank or river, and so they must bathe in the clothes they wear, since their conventions do not permit of stripping in public. After the bath, a dry garment, hanging untouched since it was washed the day before, is put on over the wet one, which is then loosened and drops to the ground.

To bathe in the open on a cold morning and in cold water, and then to stand wet and shivering in her dripping *sāri* until the washed half dried, must have been an ordeal; but I doubt if the hardship of it ever made Ramābāi even consider the possibility of omitting her bath, unless, perhaps, she were fasting. A discipline like that cannot but strengthen character. It stood her in good stead all her life.

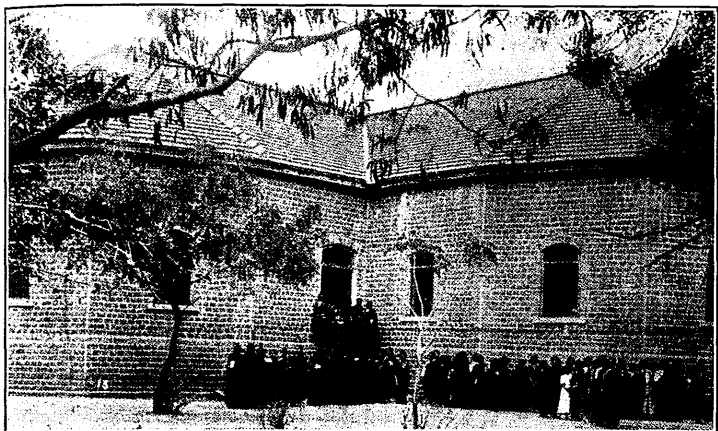
FAME

In 1878 Ramābāi and her brother reached Calcutta, where they were discovered and made much of. Ramābāi was the news of the hour, and papers all over India published her with doubtings, trumpetings and amazement. She was unimagined—a woman of purest Brāhman birth, twenty years old and unmarried, beautiful and impossibly learned. She dazzled India. She was examined by Pandits and given the title of Sarasvati, and was thereafter

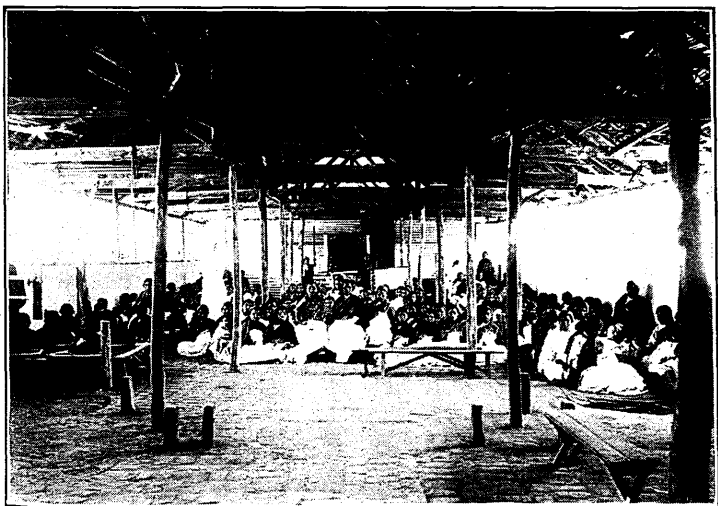
always called Panditā, the feminine of Pandit. She knew six Indian languages, and she could not only recite faultlessly and with great charm the thousands of *slokas* she knew, but she had a gift for extemporizing poetry, and enchanted her examiners by composing in a few minutes one *sloka* after another, perfect in form and full of matter and wit, on whatever subjects they assigned her. Withal, she charmed everyone by her lovely modesty. She was not vain, nor elated by her sudden fame. When at the Calcutta Senate House an English savant told her in a carefully prepared *sloka* that she could be no mortal woman, but was Sarasvati (the Goddess of Wisdom) herself in incarnation, she replied in a charming extemporaneous *sloka* that far from being the great Devi, she was only a humble devotee in Sarasvati's vast temple.

MARRIAGE

Ramābāi had many offers of marriage from Brāhmans in high position, but she was so devoted to her brother Shrinivās Shāstri that she refused to leave him. There was, however, one suitor, Bipin Sehāri Dās Medhāvi, a dear friend of her brother's, no Brāhman, but only a Shudra by caste, who evidently made some impression on her, for she gave him a half promise and in 1880, when her brother died at Dacca as the result not only of great hardships but of earlier and terrible fastings and austerities, she married Medhāvi and went with him



COMING OUT OF THE MUKTI CHURCH



LEARNING TO SEW AT MUKTI

to his home in Silchar, Assam. He was a graduate of Calcutta University and had the degree of M.A. and B.L. He practiced law and was a member of the Brāhmo Samāj, a reformed Hindu society founded by Keshab Chandar Sen, who showed Ramābāi great kindness when she was in Calcutta, and had given her both Vedas and Upanshads to read. Her marriage of course put her out of caste, and from a caste point of view almost irredeemably defiled her. She was, however, very happy for nineteen months, and then, on February 4, 1882, her husband died suddenly of cholera and left her with a baby, Manoramā—Heart's Delight. Ramābāi's own name, Ramā, means delight, and a dispenser of delight she veritably was.

WIDOWHOOD

From the Mahārāshtra, to which as a Konkanasth Ramābāi belonged, came urgent calls to her to come to Poona, the ancient capital of the old Marāthā Kingdom and the Athens of all the Marāthi-speaking country. She was told that the women of her own province had the first claim on her; but great-hearted Ramābāi, who had gone up and down India for twenty years, and could speak five of its modern vernaculars besides Sanskrit, replied that the women of India were all alike dear to her. She knew that wherever she went, however eagerly the reformed societies might welcome and help her, the orthodox element would be bitter in its opposition,

and would spare her no more than it had spared her father—far less in fact, for in the first place she was that inauspicious thing, a widow; and further, as the out-caste widow of a Shudra her position was especially ignominious.

Ever since her discovery in Calcutta, malicious tongues had been busy. At first her unmarried state had been a scandal. To orthodox people an unmarried woman of twenty-two was an indecent spectacle. They found it difficult to believe in her virtue. Then her outrageous marriage had further scandalized the orthodox and estranged even some who had at first been sympathetic. It seemed unpardonable, when she had had her choice of Brāhman suitors of wealth and position; it was sheer degeneracy, and to many minds was proof positive of the first slanders. Her husband's early death was of course a simple matter of *karma*. It was inconceivable that a Brāhmani so deeply sinning should be allowed to live in the enjoyment of her wicked lawlessness. It was only surprising that her husband had not died much sooner. It was a marvel he had not, for his own presumptuous impiety as well as for her punishment, been struck down by pestilence on the marriage day. Had that happened, it would have been very satisfactory; and yet what had happened was for her perhaps, after all, the greater punishment. There was much satisfaction, and heads wagged afresh.

Naturally feeling ran higher in the Mahārāshtra,

and Ramābāi dreaded going there; and so she went to Madras, where she had no friends, to learn English and earn her livelihood as best she might—her husband had incurred debts for his education and had left her little—but she was not happy in Madras, and very lonely. She did not know Tamil, which has a Dravidic rather than a Sanskritic base, and made slow headway in learning it, great linguist though she was; and so she yielded at last to the urgent entreaties of her friends in Poona and went there. Here, with the kind and courageous backing of such splendid men and scholars as Chief Justice M. G. Rānāde, Dr. R. G. Bhāndārkar, Mr. K. P. Telang and Mr. N. G. Chandāvarker, and others, she lectured, and founded a society for the education of women, the Āryamahilā Samaj, which, I am told, continues to this day.

She lived by herself in a little rented room to save her friends the embarrassment and inconvenience of entertaining an out-caste woman. Every household, even in the most reformed circles, included orthodox members to whom their ceremonial purity was as their very life; and to these Ramābāi's very presence would have been more offensive, more intolerable than that of a diseased person to the most finical of modern, germ-ridden Americans. To an old-fashioned Hindu, the occidental terror of small-pox, for instance, which is simply the unavoidable visitation of a goddess and in some sense even an honor, is incomprehensible, and not too admirable.

Let us not, therefore, make too great haste to cast stones at those who, having for centuries been bred to abhor ceremonial defilement, could see in Ramābāi only a defiled and sinful woman who by infallible *karma* had richly earned her desolation. The doctrine of *karma* wastes no sympathy on people who have to lie in the beds they have made. Let them do penances and lay by merit for a happier rebirth. The only way in which Ramābāi could have won the approval of these old-fashioned people would have been to set out on a course of ceaseless austerities and pilgrimages. If she had fasted weeks and fortnights, had measured her length for seven hundred miles to Benares as her mother's father had done before her, then only might she have won these bitter ones. To them it was outrageous that she, who should have hung her head and kept decently out of sight, should be shamelessly lecturing, criticizing her betters and teaching others their duty. Of course there was bitter talk, dreadful talk, and Ramābāi's supporters, too, were not unscathed.

An old Hindu lady in Poona, who loved Ramābāi almost as a superhuman being, told me years afterwards of the scandals that buzzed about her name. After telling me only one of the evil things that had been said, the old lady began to cry, and prayed that she might be forgiven the sin of uttering such wicked words. She cried and cried for a while as she remembered old times. "She was

like God to me," she said, then, wiping her eyes, "and she was holy. She was kinder to me than my own mother. Never can I repay the debt she put upon me." And yet this very woman, this adoring old lady, would not have eaten food that had been touched by Ramābāi—and there you are!

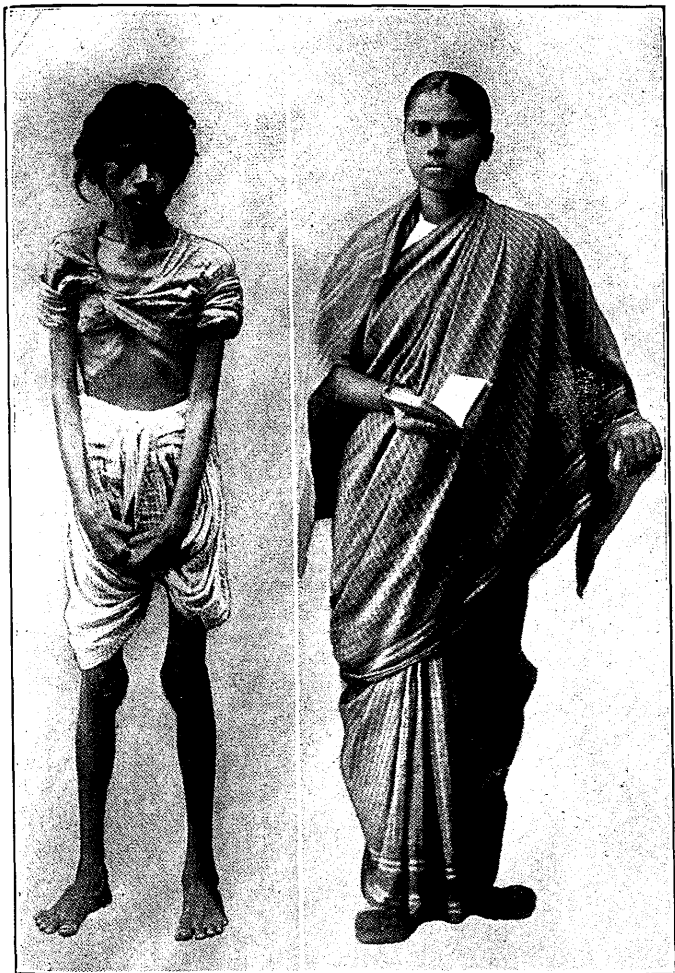
STUDY OF THE GOSPELS

In Poona Ramābāi studied English with a Miss Hurford who was principal of the Government Female Training School. Miss Hurford, though not a missionary, was an ardent Christian, and had agreed to teach Chief Justice Rānāde's wife English on condition that she be allowed to teach her the Bible also. At the Rānādes' invitation Panditā Ramābāi joined Mrs. Ramābāi Rānāde—herself a remarkable woman—in her studies. English grammar is so extremely simple in comparison with that of Sanskritic languages, that the language lesson was a simple matter to a linguist like the Panditā; but the Bible lesson interested her intensely. She had come into contact with the Bible before this. Missionaries in Calcutta had given her a Sanskrit Bible; at Silchar a Mr. Allen of the Baptist Missionary Society had called on her. She had been very much attracted by a Bengali copy of St. Luke's Gospel in her husband's library, and the day before her daughter's birth she had read a Christian pamphlet that so stirred her that she had then and there dedicated to God the life about to be born of her,

Indeed, her attraction to Christianity rather alarmed her husband who assured her that, as Brāhmos, they already had in their unfettered eclectic Brāhmo faith the best of Christianity. She had not been satisfied, and now she studied the Gospels with the keenness with which an unleashed hound follows a fresh scent.

Through Miss Hurford she met the Sisters of the Community of St. Mary the Virgin—an Anglican sisterhood founded in Wantage, England, and often called the Wantage Sisters—who work at Pāñch Howd in Poona. She also met Father Luke Rivington, Father Nilkantrāo (Nehemiah) Goreh and others of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, commonly known as the Cowley Fathers. These were all, naturally, intensely interested in this beautiful and remarkable young woman. It goes without saying that they prayed much for her. They also wrote of her to England, so that she was regularly remembered in the intercessions at both Wantage and Cowley.

In the meantime her studies with Miss Hurford continued. Of Miss Hurford Hindus have told me that though she was not a remarkably clever woman, nor educated as women are to-day, she was much loved and esteemed; that her charming manner, her earnestness and sincerity, her sympathy and alert interest in others, her warm, lively love for the girls in her charge, all won her many friends in Poona City, as the older and Indian part of



A VICTIM OF THE DREADFUL
FAMINE AS SHE CAME
TO PANDITA

AFTER BEING CARED FOR AND
TRAINED, NOW A NOBLE
BIBLE WOMAN



Poona is called. As a Government servant teaching in a Government school, she was not free to teach Christianity in the school itself; but when she gave private lessons, she made Bible-study a condition.

WANTAGE, ENGLAND

For some time Ramābāi had considered going to England for further study. She realized that her Sanskrit education, magnificent as it was, was still very incomplete. If she was going to teach other women, she must know something of the sciences, something of the modern world—geography for instance—something of normal methods. She realized this the more after meeting Mrs. Sorābji—a remarkable Christian woman, principal of a private school in Poona and well-known as an educator of unusual ability—who took a keen interest in Ramābāi and also taught her.

Being of a very independent nature, and the daughter of a man who had so cherished his independence that he had preferred starvation to mendicancy, Ramābāi set about to earn the money that should take her to England. She wrote a book on the duties of women called *Stri-dharma-niti*, which on the recommendation of Dādobā Pāndurang was bought by the government for a sum which was nearly enough to pay for a deck passage to England. The amount still needed was advanced from mission funds by Father Rivington, whom Ramābāi later repaid.

Her friends of the Prārthanā Samāj in both Poona and Bombay were in two minds about her going to England. Until she had become so interested in Christianity, they had favored her going, but now they feared lest she become a Christian. In her earlier lectures she had quoted much from the Bhagavad-Gītā, which she knew entirely by heart; but of late she had quoted almost exclusively from the Gospels. When questioned about this change, she replied that she still loved the Gītā, but that she was so much taken up with the teaching of Jesus Christ, and especially by his attitude toward women, that she naturally spoke of what was uppermost in her mind.

Early in 1883 she went to England with her baby, now nearly two years old. On sailing, when cautioned about the danger of becoming a Christian, she said she did not think she would go so far, and seemed as unconcerned as her friends were concerned and even gloomy. The deck passage was a nightmare. Once in England, she went to Wantage, where the Sisters received her and the child with open arms. The child was indeed a heart's delight and Ramābāi was always irresistible. There she was taught more English and was given a careful grounding in the Christian faith. She had, during her wanderings, become a theist; her husband had been a theist, and it was easy for her to accept our Lord as the Unitarians do; but the doctrine of His essential Deity troubled her, and after some months,

with characteristic frankness, she told the Sisters that since she did not think she could ever be a Christian she could no longer stay with them, putting herself under greater and greater obligation, when in the end she could only disappoint them. She would not return, she said, unless she became convinced of the truth of their teaching, in which event she would become a Christian. With great sorrow they saw her go, and never did they cease to pray for her return until she did indeed come back. It was the letters of Father Goreh, himself a Konkanasth Brāhman, a Sanskrit scholar, and a master of logic, that had convinced her. It was he who understood, out of his own experience and suffering, how to satisfy her mind, for he, too, had come by the very way she must take.

Ramābāi was baptised in the church at Wantage on September 29, 1883, by Dean William Butler, and confirmed early in December by the Bishop of Oxford. She always called Sister Geraldine her "Mother in Christ" and told me only a few weeks before her own death that she owed Sister Geraldine more than she could say for all her counsel and faithful prayers. She used to say that at Wantage she learned the greatest lesson of her life—discipline, and also the value of method and order. She was very happy, after her baptism, and the news brought great joy to Christians in India, but deep gloom to Ramābāi's Hindu friends. To her unfriends it was but an added reason for vitupera-

tion, an added proof of her degradation. Some of her friends stoutly maintained that even yet all would be well, and that she would return to a better mind once back in India.

CHELLENHAM

From Wantage Ramābāi went in 1884 to study in the Ladies' College at Cheltenham, where she taught Sanskrit to pay her expenses. The principal, Miss Dorothea Beale, a woman not only very able but gifted with great sympathy and insight, spent much time in teaching Ramābāi, who always spoke of her with great affection, admiration and gratitude.

ĀNANDIBĀI JOSHI

Early in 1886 Ramābāi received an urgent invitation from her kinswoman, Ānandibāi Joshi, to attend her graduation from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. Ānandibāi was the first Indian woman to receive the degree of Doctor of Medicine in any country, but died soon after her return to India, worn out by the too great ordeal of her foreign sojourn—the cold winters, the strain of observing under impossible conditions even a degree of ceremonial purity, and the difficult studies in a foreign tongue. She was not quite twenty-one when she received her degree! She, too, was a remarkable woman.

AMERICA

When Ramābāi came to America, she intended to return to England in a few weeks; but once here,

she could not get away until she went to India late in 1888. Dr. Rachel Bodley, Dean of Ānandibāi's College, in her turn came under Ramābāi's spell and showed her great kindness. Ramābāi soon found herself caught in a net of lectures. Between journeyings she studied kindergarten and normal methods. Helped by Miss Anna Hallowell, of Philadelphia, she prepared in Marāthi a set of readers modelled on Froebel's principles cleverly adapted for Indian children. She also wrote in English a stirring book called *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, now out of print, and commenced in Marāthi a book about America which she finished and published in Bombay in 1889, and which, for the interest of its unique matter and even more for the distinction, vigor and delightful freshness of its style, is even yet, I believe, included in the required reading for students of Marāthi literature in the University of Bombay.

THE RAMĀBĀI ASSOCIATION AND THE SHĀRADĀ SADAN

Ramābāi finally crossed the continent lecturing, and set sail for India from San Francisco, but not until a "Ramābāi Association" had been formed of enthusiastic women and some notable men (including Bishop Phillips Brooks, Dr. Edward Everett Hale, Dr. Lyman Abbott and Dr. Joseph Cook) who pledged themselves to support for ten years a school to be opened by Ramābāi for the education of high-

caste widows. This school, the Shāradā Sadan (House of Learning) was opened in Bombay early in 1889, on Ramābāi's return to India, but in 1890 was moved to Poona, where it stayed for more than ten years.

While in America Ramābāi had made many Unitarian friends; indeed some of her warmest supporters in the Ramābāi Association were Unitarians. She was still young in the faith of the Church, and puzzled, repelled and saddened by sectarianism, until 1891, when through a book, "From Death unto Life," by an Anglican clergyman named Haslam, she came into a glorious new life, her heart was not satisfied, nor had she entered into conscious communion with our Lord. But even so, of course, she loved Him—He was for women, nor without Him could she do for her countrywomen that which she purposed. She promised the Ramābāi Association that she would not proselytize; likewise she promised her Indian Committee that she would not press Christianity on the attention of any girl in her school. These men were the great men of Poona at this time, and her staunch friends. Though she had turned Christian, there was nevertheless no one like her, no one else to do the great work she could do. They were still proud of her, though sorrowfully proud, and they would not forsake her if she would remain neutral and not propagandise her new religion. However, she told them frankly that she would put the Vedas and the Bible together

on the school book-shelves, and that, as she would allow her girls perfect liberty to follow their own rites, to worship the sacred *tulshi* (holy basil), or whatever idols they chose, so she too must have perfect liberty to worship God in a Christian way: she would every morning—at five! and in her own room—read the Bible to her own daughter and an Indian Christian teacher in her school and pray with them. And as she did not close her door to the girls at any other time, so also she would not close her door when she read and prayed; and if any girl chose to come in and listen she would not refuse her admittance then, more than at any other time. There must be freedom, but she would not seek publicly or privately to turn any girl to the Christian faith. And this agreement she held to scrupulously until the inevitable happened. The inevitable of course, as anyone might have foreseen, was that the girls, though severely warned by their parents and guardians, could not keep away from Ramābāi's private prayers. Natural curiosity and an almost idolatrous love for her took them there one by one, until presently almost the whole school was voluntarily and regularly attending.

The policy of strict religious neutrality, though agreed to in good faith by both sides, was manifestly impracticable, for the advantage was all on Ramābāi's side, from even a purely natural point of view. Her great charm and fascinating mind, and above all, her warm love for these unfortunate

young widows in her care could not but influence them in favor of her religion, even had it been something else. Many of them, though very young, had suffered much, and were so unhappy when they came to her that they had at first distrusted even her, and responded slowly to her love. But now she was their sun; and surely, surely when she was so good, so wise, so learned, her religion could not be altogether wicked and foolish? It had been the greater marvel had they not been curious, not attracted.

Then, from a supernatural point of view, the committee had accepted impossible odds, for the advantage on Ramābāi's side was overwhelming. Far greater than her own magnetism was the irresistible Magnet to which the hungry iron of human hearts has always leaped and clung. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me," was no metaphor. Lifted up, hung high, He had been, and ever since, in all climes and times, He had been drawing all manner of men to Himself, and more strangely still, to the paradoxical joy of bearing His Cross:

"For ah! the Saviour is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet Him anywhere
Can never rest on earth again."

STORMS

In 1894 a girl asked for baptism, and the storm broke. Twenty girls were removed. People came

flying even late at night to take away their girls as from a pestilence or fire. Many of the girls were taken away weeping, and Poona was filled with wrath and vituperation. Ramābāi had played them false; the committee, upon whose solemn assurance girls had been committed to an unspeakable Christian widow, had played them false. The committee was deeply chagrined and called Ramābāi sternly to task. She met them, so Mrs. Rānāde told me many years after, "as only so great a person could." She had kept her word. She would neither apologize nor vindicate herself. Girls—not desiring baptism—blamed not her, but the Christian teacher, who they said worked secretly without Ramābāi's knowledge to convert them. Ramābāi had only to say that the fault had been this teacher's, or she had only to send the teacher away, to reinstate herself in public favor, and to retain her committee. She would do neither. She could not say she was sorry or surprised that the girls had found what was so dear to herself, nor could she give any assurance that this finding would not go on. She must have known that this teacher was not to blame, and have seen that it was not she who had drawn the girls, but our Lord Himself, who from the first had drawn her. She could well understand the eager running of the soul after Him, once it had seen Him. She had said to her girls no words of appeal, but she had read in their ears words that have always enlightened and inflamed men's

hearts, and they had done their inevitable work. To the committee, to Poona, to the Mahārāshtra, neutrality meant simply that not one girl in Shārāda Sadan might become a Christian. To Ramābāi it meant only that there must be no interference by herself, that she might not invite nor persuade; but also that each girl must have liberty of conscience, freedom to choose Christ if she desired.

The situation was impossible of continuance, and it was to be no longer peace, but a sword. The girls were not returned, and the committee resigned. They could not but admire Ramābāi's courage, serenity and quiet acceptance of blame, but for all that they found themselves in an intolerable position and they were naturally very angry. As for less noble souls, there were no bounds to the things that they said. The baser sort of papers were filled with gross attacks, and anonymous letters threatened her life. Ramābāi, however, was singularly incurious of other people's opinions about herself, and praise no less than blame affected her very little. My mother saw her stuff into her wastebasket unread, papers sent to her containing blue-penciled articles about herself—sometimes of eulogy, sometimes of violent abuse. She would glance at the headlines to get the drift, and then some encomium like "Image of Wisdom," or "Ocean of Learning" would make her laugh heartily. Or perhaps some attack announced vindictively, or gloatingly, that her sun of wisdom had set, or that she had stumbled on the

inevitable stone of fate, and she would shake with amusement. She had a very keen sense of humor, and both solemn praise and the grimaces of people made foolish by anger moved her at times to a mirth as infectious as it was spontaneous. This of course in private. She never failed in courtesy and dignity in the actual presence of those who fawned, or who gnashed their teeth, though she showed plainly that eulogy irked her, and that she was indifferent to abuse. To sincere goodwill and affection she made instant response and fourfold returns.

SAD STORIES

Of the forty-two girls left in the Shārāda Sadan the most were orphans whom Ramābāi had herself gathered in, who had no guardian but herself, or whose guardians were not only indifferent, but thankfully rid of their inauspicious charges. Some of these girls had been very cruelly treated before they were heard of by Ramābāi and her friends. One girl, Rukhminabāi, used to be shut in a room filled with the choking smoke of burning peppers, or suspended from the ceiling by her wrists, with thorns heaped below her to help her resist the temptation to loose her hands and fall. As a result of these and other sufferings, her health has never been very good these thirty-five years since her rescue. She, by the way, was a kinswoman of Ramābāi's, and very helpful in the school.

Another girl was starved and beaten, and often

suspended through a ring hung from the ceiling. When her father finally rescued her from her parents-in-law and brought her to Ramābāi, the child—she was only thirteen—was old and bent, dull-eyed and listless. She revived, however, proved to be a clever girl and later went to college.

Another girl, only ten, was treated so brutally—she was, among other punishments, branded with hot irons—that one of Ramābāi's Committee himself kidnapped her. He disguised himself as a wandering ascetic, and the girl as his *chelā* (pupil), and sat smiling in the train while the child's angry relatives-in-law searched it up and down, unable to recognize their missing Tārā in a boy with ashes piously smeared on face and body, a *chelā's* saffron tunic, and a quaint cap that covered his conveniently shaved head which, however, lacked the correct tonsure. A famous Brāhman gentleman gleefully told me the whole story not four years ago. Naturally, it was not published at the time!

However, I knew Tārā very well, as also the other girls I have mentioned, for I used to visit the Shārāda Sadan with my mother when I was a child, and to know all the girls there, and to play Indian games with the younger ones. As for my little brother, he was a prime favorite with them all; and some of them still remember how he used to delight in plaiting their hair, and grinding flour with them at their hand mills while both they and he sang grinding songs about fathers- and mothers-in-laws!

GROWTH OF THE SHĀRADĀ SADAN

After the storm Ramābāi went on undaunted. The ragings in the papers gave her much free advertising, and the Shāradā Sadan became known to unhappy widows who otherwise would never have heard of it, and who, instead of being frightened by the reports of a shocking woman named Ramābāi, wanted nothing so much as somehow to get to her! After the committee resigned, more than a dozen widows in the Shāradā Sadan, who were of age, were baptised, while others under age were eager to be. Those who did not want to be Christians went on as before, voluntarily attending Ramābāi's morning prayers, but carefully keeping their caste rules concerning defilement and purification. From the first, Ramābāi had arranged their kitchen and dining-room to insure the most scrupulous ceremonial purity.

No one knew better than she just what that meant. To the end of her life she was fastidious about the preparation and serving of her food, however plain and course it might be—not that she cared in the least about the caste of the cook, but very much about the cleanliness. As for meat, she could not bear sight nor smell of it, nor even to eat food that had been cooked or placed near meat, lest it had absorbed a little of its revolting savor. She was herself an exquisite cook, and could make delectable confections and chutneys. In fact, whatever she did, she did thoroughly well, and more than

that, with charm and distinction. In an unusual degree she had the power of concentrating her keen mind on the matter in hand, and this saved her all the nervous waste by less disciplined people of both time and vital force. It was this radiation of mental power that with her originality and richness of thought and expression made her always fascinating to watch and more than fascinating to hear; while her spirituality, large kindness, and freedom from self-seeking attracted even children and animals to her.

RAMĀBĀI'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In her pamphlet called "A Testimony," Ram-ābāi gives an intensely interesting but all too brief account of the remarkable experience which transformed her life in 1891. While feeling very unhappy and dissatisfied with her spiritual state she read a book, *From Death Unto Life*, by a Mr. Haslam, a Church of England clergyman who had great success as an evangelist, and who helped her to see what it was she felt herself to lack, a conscious union with our Lord Himself. "For some years after my baptism," she writes, "I was comparatively happy to think that I had found a religion which gave its privileges equally to men and women; there was no distinction of caste, color, or sex made in it. . . . But I had failed to understand that we are 'of God in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption' What was to be done? My

thoughts could not, and did not help me. I had at last come to an end of myself, and unconditionally surrendered myself to the Saviour.....I do not know if any of my readers has ever had the experience of being shut up in a room, where there was nothing but thick darkness, and then groping in it to find something of which he or she was in dire need. I can think of no one but the blind man, whose story is given in St. John 9. He was born blind and remained so for forty years of his life; and then suddenly He found the Mighty One, who could give Him eyesight. Who could have described his joy at seeing the daylight when there was not a particle of hope of his ever seeing it? Even the inspired evangelist has not attempted to do it. I can give only a faint idea of what I felt, when my mental eyes were opened, and when I, who was 'sitting in darkness, saw Great Light,' and when I felt sure that to me, who but a few moments ago 'sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.' I was very like the man who was told, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.....And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God.'

"I looked to the blessed Son of God who was lifted up on the cross and there suffered death, even the death of the cross, in my stead, that I might be made free from the bondage of sin, and from the fear of death, and I received life. Oh, the love,

the unspeakable love of the Father for me, a lost sinner which gave His only Son to die for me! I had not merited this love, but that was the very reason why He showed it toward me.....

“Since the year 1891 I have tried to witness for Christ,.....and I have always found that it is the greatest joy of Christian life to tell people of Christ and of His great love for sinners.”

In 1895 Ramābāi read the Life of Amanda Smith, an American freed slave who became an evangelist, and was well known in her own time and in certain circles. She used to shout for joy that she had been twice delivered from bondage—from the bondage of slavery and the bondage of sin. It would be difficult, surely, to find two women less alike in birth, mentality, temperament, breeding, than this happy child of a race so simple in its faith, so strong to endure, so indomitably gay that even slavery could not crush it, and this great-hearted, great-minded, many-gifted daughter of a people too old, too subtle, and too proud, to be either gay or simple; but the Brāhmini took her African sister to her heart and humbly learned of her. She saw that she too had a “right,” as she puts it, to this unfailing joy in God, for she too had been twice delivered—“from the slavery of man’s opinions, from the fear of man which holds so many of my dear people,” to quote herself, “and from the bondage of sin.” More than this, since Amanda Smith’s joy sprang not only from her gratitude to God for His great favors, but



FOUND ON A RUBBISH HEAP



MUKTI'S FOUNDLINGS

from her faith in the continual presence in her of His Holy Spirit, and from her obedience to His will, Ramābāi coveted for herself this life of faith and obedience, and sought to enter into it.

Soon after this she heard some addresses by an English evangelist, Mr. Gelson Gregson, both in Bombay and at a Methodist camp meeting in Lonauli, which was also attended by my father and mother and Mr. M. I. Garrison (father of Mr. A. I. and Mr. K. D. Garrison, both Alliance missionaries) of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in India. They were, naturally, deeply interested in her, and she used to say that their prayers and counsel had been a great help to her. From that time on she and my mother were very warmly attached to each other, and my mother's admiration for Ramābāi, and delight in her grew with their every meeting. It was at Lonauli that Ramābāi had a long talk with Mr. Gregson, and prayer, after which she "felt conscious" that she had received the Holy Spirit.

She mentions also that she heard addresses by the Mr. Haslam whose book she had read in 1891, by Dr. Pentecost, Mr. Robert Wilder, now General Secretary of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Mr. Reeve "and other missionaries," and that she was "greatly helped." She seems in 1895 to have entered into a new discipline of will, and so a new liberty of spirit. She took very seriously the promises: "I will instruct thee

and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Psalm 32:8), and "I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jeremiah 30:11). With "many failures" she learned "to obey," and as she obeyed she found a new rest and liberty, a great joy in God. "Whenever I heed and obey the Lord's voice with all my heart, I am very happy and everything goes right. Even the tests of faith, and difficulties, and afflictions become great blessings." As by doing it, she came to love God's will, it inevitably followed that she knew it for herself more and more clearly. She was to the last too practical, too much immersed in active administration, to be a mystic—"God has given me a practical turn of mind," she writes—and yet there was something distinctly mystical in the very clarity with which she received divine guidance. It was as if a voice spoke to her, and since for her to hear was to obey, she was not troubled with the vagueness of belief and the uncertainty concerning the will of God which come of a secret unwillingness to do it.

Our Lord said, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God" (St. John 7:17, R. V.). Ramābāi did will to do His will, and it is not then strange that she often knew it very clearly. She was by no means a simple character—she was too richly and variously endowed to be simple—but she had a singularly unified self: the central purpose of her

great heart and magnificent mind was to obey God, and that single-eyed purpose simplified for her many and difficult complexities. Once clear in her own mind, she did not hesitate nor scruple, but went forward; and if she made a mistake, wasted no time in idle grieving. What she did, she did with her whole heart; and what she gave, she gave altogether. There was no binding and unbinding of Isaac. She bound her sacrifice fast with cords to the very horns of the altar, and it was no marvel that God gave her light (Psalm 118:27).

It was also in 1895 that Ramābāi read the stirring lives of John G. Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides; of George Mueller, of Bristol, England, who "by faith" built some remarkable orphanages; and of Hudson Taylor, who founded the China Inland Mission. Her faith leaped forward. God was no respecter of persons; if He so met brave, humble men, she too would venture greatly.

In 1896 she again attended the Lonauli camp meeting, this time with fifteen of her widows, all of whom had been baptized. Early one morning in a quiet place in a wood, watching the sunrise and with her heart "full of joy and peace," and yet full of longing for the conversion of her people, she was impelled to pray that as God had given her fifteen spiritual children, He "would be so gracious as to square their number" within a year. Then her practical Konkanasth mind questioned the wisdom of her prayer. She had then forty-nine girls,

room for only sixty-five, and funds for only fifty. Where would she house two hundred and twenty-five, and what would she feed them? She asked for understanding, and in her heart she heard the words: "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27.) Abashed, she wrote the date in her notebook, and fanciful as her prayer had seemed, later events proved it to be reasonable, as is all faith in God. However, for six months in the meantime, Ramābāi and her Christian girls met every morning at five, to pray for the squaring of their number and for the conversion of many, both individuals and large groups of people.

THE CENTRAL PROVINCES FAMINE

After this, still in 1896, came the terrible famine in the Central Provinces. The reports stirred Ramābāi to the depths. She had known famine and her heart pulled her to the rescue. Reason said that it was no business of hers. Government and many charities were hard at work providing food, work and medical relief. She had no spare funds. Manifestly it was not her affair. But in her heart a voice said: "Remember the days of old!" "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" And she could not refrain. She went. It was in her heart

to get three hundred girls. People naturally asked what she would do with them, and with characteristic unconcern she said simply: "I don't know, but the Lord knows what I need, and He has promised that 'Ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God that hath dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be ashamed.' "

She found things more terrible than any she had ever seen. I cannot now go into the horrors of that famine, the unimaginable suffering, the heartrending degradation and the ruthless traffic in girls that especially roused Ramābāi. "Even the little children," she wrote, "seemed to have lost all their innocence," and behaved "like little devils." She gathered a large number of high-caste girls, young widows and children and returned to Poona, intending to put up new buildings; but epidemics were rife, and the Government thought it inadvisable to keep famine refugees in the city at all, since cholera—not to mention "famine sore mouth," "sore head," "sore heel," and other loathesomely diseased conditions—always accompanies famine.

THE MUKTI SADAN, KEDGĀON

In 1895 Ramābāi had bought a hundred acres of land at Kedgāon, thirty-four miles from Poona, hoping to make there a farm which would in time help to support the Shārādā Sadan after its American support should cease. It was to this bare, stony,

treeless, shelterless, waterless place that Ramābāi eventually took her poor waifs. At first she put up hasty matting shelters, and then as soon as possible proper buildings; she dug wells, planted trees, prepared and sowed fields, and in time made a little village where there had been nothing. "And the money for all this?" asks the reader. Well, after all, there is a good deal of money in the world and some of it—or \$85,000, to be exact—found Ramābāi in 1897. It came from all over the world. To use her own words, "Money was poured into the treasury, the blessings of the Lord came down like a shower, and His promise, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it!' has been.....fulfilled." And yet she did not beg nor advertise. She was much written about in England and America, and published occasionally a tiny magazine called the *Mukti Prayer Bell*, which gave news and reports of her work. In sore need, she the more resolutely prayed, fasted, trusted and praised God. And was not confounded.

She had not yet the three hundred girls she had set her heart on. Her first visit to the Central Provinces had been in January, 1897, and in May she heard again the voice in her heart telling her to go back. As she had only a few rupees in hand, her strong Konkanasth common sense advised caution; but the voice was clear, and she started at once, marvelling but nothing doubting. At Bhusāwal Junction, I think it was, she had to change trains,

and the voice instructed her to miss her first connection and to wait for a later train. To do this would mean not only a tedious waste of several hours, but an awkward arrival in the night at a place where there were, to say the least, no hotels. It seemed passing strange, but hers "not to question why"—she waited. As she sat on the station platform, quietly thinking, planning and praying, a train from Bombay stopped on its way to Nāgpur, and, to her great surprise, Miss Helen Richardson, an English friend, alighted, ran to her and put some currency notes in her hand. Miss Richardson said that she had been thinking of Ramābāi in the train, and feeling impelled to send her some money, had planned to send it as soon as possible—but here was the money, and Miss Richardson ran back to her train! Strange, and not strange. Ramābāi told me the story herself. I cannot remember now the amount of the gift, but only that it was ample for her needs, and that with it she brought back a second company of starving girls.

HELPERS

Of course, money was far from being Ramābāi's only urgent need. How could she single-handed care for three hundred sick and starving girls, babies and women? She had good help, and, what was more, sympathetic coöperation from the first. Sundrābāi Pavār, who had been with Ramābāi for several years, took over the management of the Shāradā Sadan and kept Ramābāi in close touch with the

developments there. Then several of the older women in the Shāradā Sadan went to Kedgāon and worked very hard to build up the new school. Among these were Manikarnikābāi, Ramābāi's own sister-in-law—the widow of a much older half-brother, and Rukhminibāi, also a kinswoman. I cannot now recall all those early helpers, but I must at least mention Mr. Gangādharpant Gadre, Ramābāi's Brāhman secretary who later became a Christian; Marybāi Aiman, a trained nurse; Kāshibāi, the head farmer—yes, a woman; Saudāminibāi, matron of the industrial department, and brave Gangābāi and Bhimābāi, who with Kāshibāi, Saudāminibāi and several others went up and down the Central Provinces gathering destitute women and children, saving girls from worse than death, and turning them over in hundreds to various mission schools. Ramābāi had her own hands too full at Kedgāon to go oftener than three times into the famine area, but what she saw there so deeply stirred her that she sent these others to work in her stead.

Very soon, American and English women, one by one, came to Ramābāi's help, never to leave her, some of them, until they died. Time would fail me to tell of them adequately; suffice it to say that Ramābāi counted them her dear sisters and thanked God for them. Among them were Miss Minnie Abrams, Miss Mary Macdonald, Miss Emily Bacon, Miss Joan Macgregor, Miss Elmina Hoffman, Miss Victoria Brazier, Miss Carrie and Miss Lizzie

Couch, Miss Mary Berkin, Miss Lucy Wakeford, Miss Jessie Ferguson, Miss Parsons, Miss Boes, Miss Brown, Dr. Mulford, Dr. Roberts, Dr. Talbot, Miss Wyatt, Miss Whitley, and Miss Lissa Hastie, whom Ramābāi, after her daughter's death, appointed her first successor, and who is still connected with the work, although just at present she is taking a long-deferred furlough in England. At Kedgāon still are a number of the ladies I have mentioned, besides newer helpers whose names have eluded me. They are all bravely carrying on Ramābāi's work, I beg pardon of them and of those others also whose names I have failed to recall. The Rev. W. W. Bruerer, of the M. E. Mission, baptised most of the girls, and was from first to last a great help in Mukti Church.

Of course, Ramābāi's dearest helper was her lovely and very able daughter, Manoramābāi, who was to have succeeded her, and who until her untimely death in 1921 carried an increasingly heavy share of her mother's great burden. Miss Hastie, who has been seventeen years at Kedgāon and knew Manoramābāi very intimately, has written a charming sketch of her life. Miss Hastie accepted a staggering burden when she acceded to Ramābāi's desire, and has carried it courageously and ably in spite of long overwork, great weariness and the natural difficulties of the undertaking.

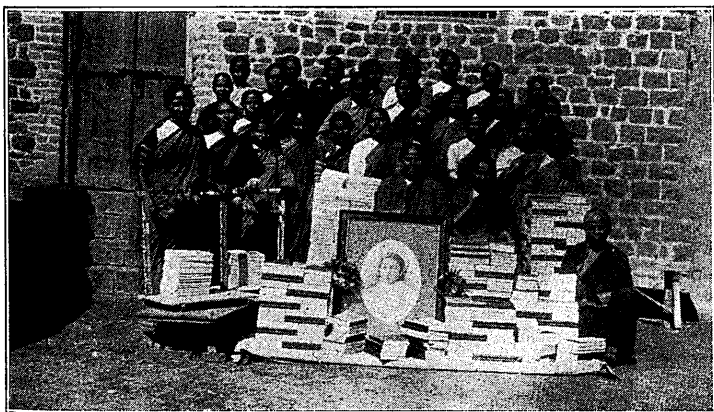
“LABORS MORE ABUNDANT”

To return to my narrative, the new school at Kedgāon was named Mukti Sadan—House of Salvation, or Liberation. It might have been called the House of Incessant Labor, for Ramābāi and her helpers had little rest at first—or *ever*, for that matter! There were dormitories, workrooms, school-rooms and a church to be built; Bible and primary classes to be carried on; industries to be organized, besides the tremendous daily business of living—of grinding flour, cooking, washing, and never-ending cleaning; and through it all, endless nursing, for recovery from starvation and its attendant diseases is very slow. Many of the girls, during those terrible months of hunger and suffering before their rescue, had got into slack and dirty ways—even though they were all of high castes—which took months of patient and persistent oversight to mend. There were nauseous things to deal with and to do.

Greater than all else was the spiritual care of this multitude, for starvation seems for a time to deaden the finer sensibilities, and some of these girls had not escaped knowledge and even experience of evil. For such, a separate place was necessary—the Kripa Sadan, or House of Kindness. With St. Paul, Ramābāi might have said: “Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble and I burn not?” (R. V.) To her every girl was a



MUKTI WOMEN PRINTING RAMABAI'S TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE



BIBLES READY FOR DISTRIBUTION

separate person, not a mere head in a herd. She knew every girl by name, and her wonderful memory stored every girl's history. She remembered where and how she had got each one—this one fallen half-dead under a tree, that one crawling along the road, ravenous and exhausted, And the girls knew that she knew them, and idolized—and a little feared her.

As soon as the younger ones were strong enough, they were sent to the Shāradā Sadan to attend school and lived in a rented house near it. This left the older ones, the ill ones and the babies at Mukti. The babies and patients engaged a good number of women, and the rest worked in the dairy, or the sewing and weaving rooms, or at the oil mill, or at farm work. Each did her share of housework, and every one—unless utterly incapable—was taught at least to read and write.

On October 26, 1897, seventy-three persons were baptised, including Mr. Gadre and several Shāradā Sadan women. Soon after, thirty-six more were baptised, and so on, to the end of Ramābāi's life, larger and smaller groups continued to be baptised as they were ready and willing.

AMERICA AGAIN

In 1898, just before the completion of the ten years' help undertaken by the Ramābāi Association, Ramābāi went again to America, to tell her friends of the work they had enabled her to do, to thank

them and to urge them to continue her support. She had at first asked them for five thousand dollars a year; they had sent her six thousand a year, besides thirty-five thousand for land and buildings. Now she needed twenty-thousand a year for running expenses. The old association was disbanded, and a new one formed, under the name of the American Ramābāi Association, which undertook less than the first one, but which nevertheless helped her to the last, and which still sends an annual sum—how much I do not know. Mrs. Judith Andrews, one of Ramābāi's most loyal friends, continued in office as Chairman of the Executive Committee. Mrs. Arthur Perry, of Boston is the present president of the association, and Miss Clementina Butler, the present chairman of the Executive Committee, has written a very interesting short life of Ramābāi called *Panditā Ramābāi Sarasvati* and published by Fleming H. Revell Company. There is, by the way, a longer life by Helen S. Dyer, published by Pickering and Inglis, London and Glasgow.

This second American visit—including a short stay in England—took Ramābāi out of India for seven months, and was a great strain both on her and those she had left in charge of the Shāradā and Mukti Sadans. She never left India again.

THE GUJARĀT FAMINE

In 1900 came the final horror, a famine in Gujarāt, where there had been no famine for a hundred

years, in Rajputānā and various native states, as those states are called which are ruled by Indian princes. The loss of life in British India alone was about one and a half millions, while "in the native states more than ten million people disappeared without leaving a trace behind them." The census reports for the ten years from 1892 to 1901, inclusive, show that "there was an increase of less than 6,000,000 instead of the normal increase of 19,000,000, which was to be expected, judging by the records of previous decades" in India. Thirteen million people—twice the then population of Canada! These are terrible figures.

Government spent \$32,000,000 on food alone, and nearly as much in help to farmers and the native states. Any one who wants more information will find it in an intensely interesting chapter called "Famines and their antidotes" in Mr. William Eley-Curtis' book, *Modern India* (Fleming H. Revell Company). As Lord Curzon said: "The most notable feature of the famine of 1900-01 was the liberality of the public," as well as of the Government. The contributions from abroad were about \$3,000,000, and missions gathered up thousands of orphans. Ramābāi sent twenty women, including eight she had found in the Central Provinces famine, to help in the work, and besides many others whom they rescued they brought to her alone 1,350 women and children! She seemed to many to have lost her mind, and indeed the care of this overwhelming

multitude was staggering. Her helpers rose bravely to the new need. The Shāradā Sadan and the Central Provinces girls and women worked well, more English and American women came to help, and slowly order was brought out of chaos; new buildings rose, new wells were dug, and new industries set going. The organization and ordering for twenty-two years of this institution—not only enormous, not only complex, but making constant and terrific demands on heart as well as mind—gave full play to an “executive capacity” which according to Professor D. K. Karns, “stands unparalleled in India.” It amounted to genius.

Ramābāi had now more than 1,900 wards, and only to keep every one of these busy and in her place was in itself a mammoth task. Ramābāi was everywhere, directing and helping; finding out malingerers, prodding on laggards, encouraging and teaching the diligent, and doing many things with her own hands. Anywhere on those busy hundred acres might be seen the indomitable little generalissimo—in her spotless widow’s white—who, like George Mueller, trusted God as if all depended on Him, and worked as if all depended on her. She was tireless—though often tired beyond telling—never ceasing in prayer, ever gallant in faith, and resolute in praising God through fair and foul weather; “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

The new girls were different from the old—much wilder, and very much more difficult. In this famine Ramābāi had finally abandoned her original plan of a school for high-caste widows only, and had taken girls of all castes, even thieving castes, aboriginals and out-caste scavengers. Many times her old girls and helpers wrung their hands in despair. But Ramābāi was undaunted. She must have taken great comfort at times in Ezekiel's commission: "The children are impudent and stiff-hearted; I do send thee unto them: be not afraid of them, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions." Not on roses did any sleep in Mukti. But again prayer and labor prevailed. The wildest girls ran away, the rest settled down, and hundreds were baptised.

"GOOD UNTO ALL MEN"

The minimum daily expense of the Mukti Sadan at that time was two hundred dollars, and that allowed only about ten cents a head—not extravagant surely. The English and American helpers received no salary, but had at least to be fed, and received occasional gifts of money; teachers had to be paid, and of course there were many other expenses. Besides, whenever there was a local scarcity in the five villages about her, great-hearted Ramābāi would open relief work—building and well-digging. And when she lay in state on that solemn fifth of April five years ago, and the villagers poured in for

one last look and obeisance, one heard one and another trembling voice say, "Five villages live by her grace." Besides, she helped many other people quite outside her work. Time would fail me to tell of half she did, and people who knew her well will be disappointed in this meagre account of her works, and herself.

She was greatly daring. "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure," she would quote calmly, with her beautiful smile, when any were concerned at the drying of wells or the emptiness of storehouses. But she herself prayed and fasted until all was well again. She was not frightened by hard things; she knew that "by these things men live." After the great enlargement of Mukti, Ramābāi moved the Shārādā Sadan to Kedgāon and sold her establishment in Poona. She built a small school for orphan boys, the Sadānanda Sadan—House of Unending Gladness. The little girls' department, by the way, was named Priti Sadan—the House of Love, but unofficially those five hundred little girls were called the Rabbits! Ramābāi started a day school for village children also, which was attended by Brāhman and other high-caste children; and classes for children of the farmers' and herders' castes, and low castes as well, though she had to pay them a penny a day to get them to attend at all! One of these "salary children," as they were called, a wee maid of five, or at the most six, knew twenty-five Psalms by heart. For that Ramābāi gave her two new *sāris*. She was a charming child.



TRAINING CLASS FOR BIBLE WOMEN



"BARTIMAEUS SADAN," SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

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THE MUKTI PRESS

Not satisfied with all she did, Ramābāi set up a printing press as well, and in time had four good printing machines. She had amused herself while at Wantage by learning to set type for the Sisters' little press, and now she taught her girls to set type in Marāthi, Hindi, English, and later on Greek and Hebrew, and had them trained to run the presses and, in short, to do all the work of a press, even to bookbinding, and to do it thoroughly well. This was a great achievement, and Miss Victoria Brazier and a Jewish printer of the Beni-Israel Community, Mr. Aaron Jacob Divekar, had a very important and arduous share in it. Every one told Ramābāi that it could not be done, that Indian women had no aptitude for mechanics. I think she enjoyed being told that she could not do this and that, for with all her great learning she seemed never to have learned the meaning of the word impossible. She had her girls taught carpentering, brickmaking and masonry. It was they who built the boys' school, to mention only one thing. They even blasted and built a big well, and that without the accidents the men had had in digging other wells. All the wells, about a dozen, were named, nine of them for the "fruit of the Spirit" listed in Galatians 5:22, 23. She used to love to name things as well as people and animals, and had a gift for quaint and significant names.

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

Finally, in addition to everything else, Ramābāi undertook to translate the whole Bible from the original Greek and Hebrew into Marāthi. She was not satisfied with the Bible Society's translations, the first of which had faults of grammar and idiom, and the second of which she considered too pedantic—beyond the understanding of simple people. Her aim was to make a translation in pure but simple Marāthi. She learned Greek and Hebrew, and took up her colossal task with breath-taking resolution. It took her about fifteen years, a little every day, and she completed it only a few months before her death; in fact, she read the proofs almost to the last. When she died, a 50,000 edition of the Bible was already well under way. Whatever scholars may say of the translation, the common people hear it gladly. It is often very charming, though she sometimes erred on the side of too great literalness. Her own speech was famous for its purity, its vigor, its freshness and range. She was fascinating in conversation, and a brilliant lecturer—very witty, and yet with a terrific, swathlike earnestness. It is a pity that the originality and very idiom of her Marāthi never found expression in her other stereotyped English. Brilliant is a word too much used these days to have much meaning, but Ramābāi was really brilliant, and people would leave her lectures saying, “Ah, *that* was *Marāthi*!”

AUSTRALASIAN SUPPORT

I should say here that after Ramābāi's death the cost of printing her translation of the Bible was undertaken by her many friends in New Zealand, who wished to make it a memorial to her. Already 18,500 Bibles have been printed, of which 13,000 have been distributed. In 1902 Manoramābāi with Miss Minnie Abrams visited Australia and New Zealand to make Ramābāi's work known there, with the result that they won many warm friends. Several helpers have come from there and altogether a very large amount of money.

Ramābāi translated the Gospels first, printed more than a hundred thousand of them—I forget the exact number—and scattered them far and wide, also many tracts which she herself wrote. Many thousands of New Testaments were also published and given away. She thought it wrong to sell the Bible or any part of it. In fact, she *never* understood taking so well as giving—except in the matter of girls!

PAST AND PRESENT NUMBERS AT MUKTI

Ramābāi was always taking in some one—she took in the saddest derelicts, and the halt and the maimed and the blind, and called all these afflicted ones by the name of "Friends," lest any despise them. For these, her Friends, she made special feasts, at which she served them with her own hands. Her own sufferings in youth gave her such

a horror of hunger that she could not turn away even a hungry animal. But to give up a girl, that was different, and a difficult lesson at first. However, she learned it, and many of her girls went out as teachers and Bible women, and many hundreds were married to Christian men. She had never many more than 1,900 girls at any one time, but altogether, from 1889 to 1922, it is probably a very moderate estimate to say that she must have taken in well over three thousand people. Only the angels know them all, though the books at Mukti record the most of them.

When Ramābāi died, there were about 800 in Mukti, a large proportion of whom were babies and young boys and girls. These she was always getting, and these will always continue to come in— orphaned and abandoned children. Very lovely many of them are, despite their sad histories, and many of them can remember no home but Mukti. There must always be a fair number of elder women to care for these little ones. Since Ramābāi's death a great many girls have been married, or have gone elsewhere to work, and the present number in all Mukti is, I believe, about 500. To Ramābāi it would seem very small, but the responsibility and the expense are still very great—an invitation to every reader of these words to help in some way this great and unique work. There is nothing else quite like it in India, or the world. And is there anywhere in the world any one like Ramābāi? with

her amazing combination of scholarship, goodness and practical ability?

AN OCEAN HEART

As to Solomon, so to Ramābāi, God had given "wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore." A girl who was constantly with her once said, "Mother has an ocean in her heart." She could not but do things in a large way. In the first place she must have been naturally generous, and with that she had her father's example of lavish hospitality, and his careful training that only by the avoidance of all obligation could one maintain one's independence; perhaps also she had the instinct of the Hindu seeking freedom (freedom of soul in liberation from reincarnation prolonged for ages through millions of births) to avoid debt, to make full payment as one goes, that there be no need to return. But that Ramābāi did not act consciously on this idea is shown clearly by her reckless overpayment, for according to the law of *karma* overpayment also necessitates return, since those whom one has obligated must have opportunity to pay *their* debts! "Souls are entangled as much by good deeds as by evil deeds."

The keeping of an even balance calls out in many people a niggling nicety that is not attractive. Certainly it was not in Ramābāi, who overpaid royally, and whose great delight was to be always giving.

Freely she had received; freely, freely would she give. As God's love and grace were boundless, so His gifts must not be dispensed by weight and measure. The ocean was infinite—why dole it out in drachms and scruples? When a nature so nobly endowed is further purged, enlarged and beautified by divine grace to a fullness of power and beauty incomprehensible to smaller, more selfish souls, is it any wonder that heads are shaken and that sometimes even friends misunderstand?

KONKANASTH TRAITS

But never was a woman freer from sentimentality. She could be very hard, very autocratic, very severe. I once heard Dr. Nicol Macnicol say that the Konkanasths are as hard-headed and canny as the proverbial Aberdonian Scots. They are not "easy to be entreated." Their neighbors sometimes think them hard-hearted as well as hard-headed. They are clannish. Their women have in Western India the same reputation for thrift and exquisite cookery that French housewives have earned in Europe. They waste nothing. It is significant that the Konkanasths have never produced a great saint—except Ramābāi, or a great poet, unless it was Nārāyan Vāman Tilak, also a Christian. Religious and poetic ecstasy is foreign to their temperament. But they produced the Peshwās, and they have produced most of the great names of Western India for a century past. Their shrewdness and practical ability are

proverbial. To understand and appreciate them one must know something of their historical and geographical handicaps, of the penurious soil that of necessity bred thrift and hardness. Not easily did they win their place in the sun. Why should they push others up the ladder? "Each caste for itself, and the devil take the hindermost!" might once have been their motto; but now they too, many of them at least, have been caught in the net of service.

It was Konkanasth Gokhale who founded the Servants of India, that splendid society of gifted men who without trumpetings and with almost amusing but very lovable matter-of-factness, and with very real self-sacrifice, are serving India, even to the least of their brethren, the Untouchables. It was Mrs. Ramābāi Rānāde, also a Konkanasth, who for many years, until her death in 1924, gave all her time and ability and failing strength to the Sevā Sadan—House of Service, a Hindu society for training and helping women, especially Brāhman widows.

To understand Panditā Ramābāi at all, one must know something of the remarkable people that gave her birth; and yet the more one sees of them, the more one marvels at her, so unlike was she in her greatness, with all her likeness. If one says that her radiance was the grace of God in her, no Hindu will take exception, though he will interpret that fact in his own way; but if one says, not only that it was the grace of God in her, but with St. Paul

that it was the "Illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," many Konkanasths will rise up in severe displeasure. They love to bask in the effulgence of their great names. They call the great roll: Rānāde, Bāl Gangādhār Tilak, Gokhale, Nārāyan Vāman Tilak, Panditā Ramābāi, and the rest, and "Where can you find their equals?" they ask. They look north, south, east, west, but cannot find quite this lustre. Humility is not their *métier*! Of Ramābāi they speak as a *divya ratna*, a lucent gem, and I have heard them mourn her defection to Christianity. However, her death has notably softened the old bitterness and revived the old pride in her. Some like to speak of her conversion as a mere accident of the times, and of her Christian faith as a mere knot on a great tree. "There was no Sevā Sadan in 1883," they say, "no common ideal of service. She was forced to become a Christian in order to carry out her great ideas of education and freedom for women. If she had been born a generation later she would not have needed to turn Christian. She would have worked shoulder to shoulder with us."

CHILDREN OF THE SHĀRADĀ SADAN

It is like surmising what Ramābāi had done, had she been her own child; for it is freely admitted that the Sevā Sadan, Professor Karve's University for women, the Kanyāshālā and many a minor institution are all the children of Ramābāi's Shāradā

Sadan. It was she who with ever-to-be-venerated courage and perseverance, in the face of humanly insuperable odds, built the road on which now so many follow—at a remove. But we must never forget Ānanta Shāstri Dongre, her great father, and that wonderful little Lakshmibāi Abhyankar, her mother, to whom for their exceeding worthiness was entrusted this shining gem to cut and polish for a great illuming.

FAITH

As for Ramābāi's faith, to speak of it as a mere excrescence on her greatness, they little knew her who speak so, and sternly would she rebuke them could she but speak. As well talk of the earth as complete without the sun, the machine without the dynamo; as well seek to disjoin lamp and oil, body and life, the rose and its fragrance, the fruit and its sweetness, as to consider Ramābāi apart from Him who was her life, our Blessed Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

How sang Nārāyan Vāman Tilak, one of the sweetest singers in the innumerable company of our Lord's lovers, the greatest Maharashtri poet of his time?

*As player and viol,
Thought and speech,
Fragrance and nostril,
Breath and flute,
So are Jesus and I—so and not otherwise.*

*As the mother, of her child,
The flame, of its lamp,
So is Jesus of me, the very life.*

*As rain to a pool,
Water to a fish,
The sun to the day,
So is my Jesus to me akin.*

So too might Ramābāi have declared the union of her soul with Jesus, but that in her humility she might have shrunk from placing herself as it were beside him, instead of at His feet. To her, as to St. Thomas, He was "Lord and God." To her, as to the Nicene Fathers, He was "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father." She believed that by Him "all things were made" and could not praise Him enough that "for us men and for our salvation He came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man;" that for us He was crucified and rose again; that for us, seated on the right hand of the majesty on high, He makes continual intercession; that "He shall come again with glory," and that His "Kingdom shall have no end." Amen and Amen.

HUMILITY

Ramābāi honestly hated adulation. To her it was a matter not of modesty but of common honesty to

give God the glory for any music she made, for she knew herself to be a mute viol or flute without the Player's Hand and Breath. If the instrument was good, that too was to the praise of its Maker. It stirred her to the soul to hear God praised, and I have seen her displeased, not embarrassed, not modestly demurring and secretly warmed, but sincerely displeased because she herself was praised instead of God. She had the lovely humility of a great nature capable of great pride, and strongly rooted in pride—pride the subtler that it was free from vanity. It was the achieved humility of pride ruthlessly disciplined, trampled and offered up to God as a holocaust.

In my own unworthy way I loved her very much and found her a continual delight. Indeed she was endlessly interesting. And because I had known her since I was a child, I was on very free and affectionate terms with her. She and my mother had been like sisters, and so I called her "Maushi," maternal aunt, and she treated me more like a daughter, even, than a niece. I loved to tell her how wonderful she was, partly because my delight in her clamoured for expression, and partly sometimes, I confess, to tease her a little, and because I loved to see her beautiful humility. Sometimes she only smiled fondly at me or kissed me. Sometimes if I was very absurd—called her Sarasvati Devi, for example—she laughed. I loved to make her laugh. I would repeat to her what other people said of her,

mimicking their fervid tones and rapturous gestures, and at such things she would shake with laughter as at a joke. But when I was serious and told her the serious praise of estimable people she was not pleased, and said quietly, "I would rather you did not tell me these things." This happened once or twice, and then with finality she told me never again to repeat praise to her, and this of course I could not disregard.

PRESENCE

Indeed, Ramābāi was not a person anyone could disregard. Her girls loved her to the distraction and sometimes behaved like kittens with her, but they did not take liberties with her. She had a remarkable presence, such a presence as only a person of her greatness, breeding and great background could have. Her simplicity, unconscious dignity and perfect courtesy were very charming, and very impressive. She radiated power. A Syrian Christian friend of mine, who as a boy had had the great good fortune to study Sanskrit with the Prime Minister of Travancore, a brother of the artist Rājā Ravi Varmā, used never to tire of singing his master's praises. After describing the simplicity of his life and dress—like most South Indians he usually wore nothing above the waist except a scarf about his shoulders—my friend said enthusiastically, "And his bearing was such, that had he entered an audience chamber, unknown, and half-clothed as he was, governors and viceroys would instinctively

have risen to their feet to do him honour." One hoped governors and viceroys would have had the perception and sensibility so fitly to do, for authority may be blinding. But anyway that was how Ram-ābāi made one feel. I have seen Englishmen kiss her hand as she had been a queen, and had she not rigidly prevented it, thousands of Hindus would have come to fall at her feet. This is only fact.

APPEARANCE

She was a little more than five feet in height, very perfectly fashioned, a small woman. And yet she never seemed small; there was something august about her, not because sedentary life in later years made her somewhat stout; it was rather her remarkable presence and the massive beauty of her head. As a widow she always wore her hair short—orthodox custom requires that the head be shaved—and undoubtedly it added to her distinction, for it waved charmingly about her face and head. Her skin was pale golden olive, very fine and smooth, and she had very fine grey-blue eyes, a wide brow, and an open face of great spiritual and intellectual beauty. To see her was to love her.

As a widow she dressed always in pure white—widows may also dress in red—and it accentuated her purity. She had been so long a widow that, for all her manifold motherhood, she had always an air of austere virginity like an abbess or convent mother, perhaps like that holy Anna, who had been

a widow for fourscore and four years (R. V.) and “departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”

PRAYER AND FASTING

So also, prayers night and day, and frequent fastings were Ramābāi's rule for many years. Her intercessions increased in magnitude with every year, and she came in time to obey St. Paul's exhortation to pray for “all men” (1 Timothy 2: 1-4). She prayed daily for hundreds of people by name, all kinds of people, great and small, near and far. In her Bible she kept long lists of names, those of all within Mukti Sadan, divided into weekly recurring groups, and names of many others besides. Then she prayed for whole castes, races, nations, for the mammoth divisions of mankind according to religion, for all governments, for all who are oppressed, for all the poor and the suffering, for all the rich, and the violent, and that the Kingdom of God might come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and the knowledge of His glory fill the earth “as the waters cover the sea.” Great heart, great desires, great faith, great fortitude—like Daniel, she must have been “greatly beloved” in heaven. When she was well, she thought nothing of a four days' fast; and to the last in all her growing weakness, she rose every night to pray while others slept. At rising also, she prayed and during the day she retired regularly to her room and prayed,

twice or oftener. She had also the habit of prayer in the midst of work. She never ate food or even drank water without thanksgiving. I have seen her bow her head to thank God for a glass of water, lose herself in prayer and hold the glass for several minutes before she remembered to drink. With God she had the literal simplicity of a child, and with it the profound surrender of a great nature. She loved God with passion, but a passion that can be satisfied only with obedience.

FAULTS

And had she no faults, and was she not mortal woman? Yes, she had faults, she had the weaknesses of her greatnesses; and when she made mistakes—they were not small mistakes—they were to scale. But it is only five years since she died, and I am not yet far enough from her to speak easily of her faults. I have said she could be very autocratic, and severe. Let that suffice.

There was clay in her gold, but the clay was very fine clay, as the gold was rare gold and thrice refined. I loved her as she was, and to have known her at all is a good for which I shall never cease to thank God. She blessed me as she blessed many, so many that only God knows them all, great and small, widely remote and widely various.

THE PASSING

She died of septic bronchitis on April 5, 1922. She was herself to the last, alert, praying, praising

God, and thinking of others. Weeks before, with her usual foresight, she had set her house in order. The very day before she died she wrote a letter about the disposition of some children. She slipped away quietly in her sleep as the day broke; and the light of that dawning remained on her face, so that she seemed wrapped in radiant peace and to become younger and lovelier with every hour she lay. She lay in the church she had built, and there her girls sat about her in quiet hundreds, all that tragical day, and all that holy night. Never can I forget that silent morning, and never have I seen such a procession as passed by her all the day. Brāhmans and out-castes alike came to do her honor, and bowed themselves to her feet. It was a symbol.

And in the morning after brave singing, and prayer, and the reading of great words, Ramābāi's girls, fasting since the evening before her death, bore her on their slender shoulders—fain for the honor of that burden—to a grave within sight of a great well she had named *Dhir*—Fortitude. It, too, was a symbol.

* * * * * * *

“Here is the patience of the saints:.....they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.”



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